

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 FDRE-00

HEW-08 INR-11 NSAE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 RSC-01 SCA-01

SCSE-00 USIA-15 SWF-02 SS-20 NSC-07 SR-02 ORM-03

SCI-06 COME-00 EB-11 TRSE-00 DRC-01 SP-03 L-03 H-03

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TAGS: UNGA, ECLA, SWEL, HO

SUBJ: SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM'S STATEMENT ON HONDURAS DISASTER

QUOTE:

APPEAL BY SECRETARY-GENERAL TO INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO HONDURAS

WITHIN THE PAST WEEK HONDURAS HAS BEEN STRUCK BY A TRAGIC
NATURAL DISASTER WHICH HAS CAUSED EXTRAORDINARY HUMAN SUFFERING
AND LOSS. ALTHOUGH PRECISE ESTIMATES OF THE LIVES LOST
AND THE DAMAGE SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF THE HURRICANE,
WHICH STRUCK HONDURAS LAST THURSDAY, ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE,
ITS TOLL HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND DEVASTATING. REPORTS
OF THE SITUATION INDICATE THAT MORE THAN 7,000 PERSONS HAVE
LOST THEIR LIVES AND MANY THOUSANDS MORE, WITHOUT HOMES,
FOOD OR MEDICINES, HAVE LOST THEIR LIVELIHOOD. THE SPECIAL
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF
CO-ORDINATOR HAS REPORTED FROM HONDURAS THAT SOME 100,000
INDIVIDUALS WILL BE IN NEED OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR
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THE COMMING MONTHS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS HAS QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY ACTIVATED ITS NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMITTEE AND EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT, WITH THE AID OF EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE, TO RELIEVE THE UNFORTUNATE VICTIMS OF THIS HURRICANE. THIS EFFORT, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN GREATLY HAMPERED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF COMMUNICATION FACILITIES, FLOODING IN PORTS AND RIVERS AND THE COMPLETE ISOLATION OF HUNDREDS OF TOWNS AND VILLAGES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE FLOOD WATERS LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THE HURRICANE WILL SOON BE SUBSIDING, BUT MANY MONTHS WILL BE REQUIRED TO RECOVER FROM THIS STORM WHICH HAS STRUCK A DEVASTATING BLOW TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE. THE IMPACT OF THIS TROPICAL STORM HAS RESULTED IN A STAGGERING SETBACK TO THE DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS OF THE COUNTRY.

BECAUSE OF THE SEVERITY WITH WHICH THE HURRICANE STRUCK HONDURAS, MASSIVE RELIEF AND RECOVERY EFFORTS MUST BE UNDERTAKEN. OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS, WORKING CLOSELY WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF SEVERAL UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND ORGANIZATIONS, ARE CURRENTLY ASSESSING REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCY RELIEF NEEDS. THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE IN HONDURAS AND THE HONDURAS MINISTRY OF HEALTH HAVE INITIALLY ESTIMATED THAT SOME US\$800,000 IS NECESSARY FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPLIES. THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE HAS TRANSMITTED AN EXTENSIVE LIST OF APPROPRIATE EMERGENCY FOOD REQUIREMENTS, AND SOME 500 TONS OF FOODSTUFFS, ALREADY IN HONDURAS, HAVE BEEN DIVERTED FOR THE EMERGENCY BY THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTORY OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND HAS ALLOCATED US\$150,000 FROM UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESERVE FUND FOR A CO-ORDINATED PROGRAMME TO BOOSTER THE HEALTH, NUTRITION AND CHILD SERVICES FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY THE HURRICANE; AND IN ADDITION TO CO-ORDINATING AND MOBILIZING REFLEF, THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR HAS IMMEDIATELY MADE AVAILABLE THE MAXIMUM AVAILABLE ALLOCATION FOR THE LOCAL PURCHASE OF URGENTLY NEEDED MEDICAL SUPPLIES.

IN THIS CONNECTION, I HAVE ALSO BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT
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WITH THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA (ECLA) WHO HAS DISPATCHED A MISSION TO HONDURAS TO COLLABORATE WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES IN A STUDY OF THE MAGNITUDE AND SCOPE OF THIS DISASTER AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF HONDURAS. THIS ACTION IS BEING TAKE TO FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY ACTIVITIES. A SPECIAL SESSION OF ECLA WILL BE CONVENED IN NEW YORK TO CONSIDER WHAT FURTHER STEPS ARE NECESSARY

FOR AN EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY PROGRAMME. I HAVE
ALSO REQUESTED THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ECLA TO PERSONALLY
VISIT HONDURAS DURING THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND TO KEEP ME
FULLY APPRAISED OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ECLA MISSION.

MANY GOVERNMENTS AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS HAVE BEEN
SWIFT AND GENEROUS IN THEIR RESPONSE TO THIS TRAGEDY. NEVER-
THELESS, THE MAGNITUDE OF THE DESTRUCTION AND LOSS OF LIFE
IN HONDURAS CALLS FOR EVEN MORE INTENSIFIED EXTERNAL AID.
I THEREFORE ADDRESS A MOST URGENT APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY TO SPARE NO EFFORT IN HELPING TO RELIEVE THE MASSIVE
HUMAN SUFFERING NOW BEING EXPERIENCED IN HONDURAS AND TO ASSIST
IN THE GREAT TASK OF RECOVERY WHICH LIES AHEAD. UNQUOTE
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